



## Mentor FAQ's

### **Who are the Mentors in the programme?**

Our Mentors come from diverse backgrounds, just like our Little Brothers and Little Sisters. They are regular people, just like you, who want to have a positive impact on a young person in need. What you have or haven't accomplished isn't an issue. Role models come in all shapes and sizes, and you could be a perfect fit!

### **Do I need special skills or qualifications?**

Not at all, every mentor who joins the programme brings their own unique skills set and attributes, all of which are valuable in the life of a young person. We also have training before you are matched.

### **How much time do I have to give each week?**

We ask for one hour, you can however give more depending on the outing you choose to do.

### **How long do I have to mentor for?**

We ask for a minimum of 12 months commitment to the programme, where the benefits of mentoring are believed to become more ingrained and long lasting.

### **What if I have a holiday planned or get sick?**

We understand that you have a life too, and that sometimes people get sick. If you know you are going away just let us and the parent/caregiver know so they can plan. If you are sick you would let your mentee's parent/guardian know.

### **What is my role as a mentor?**

As a mentor you provide support and encouragement, spend quality time sharing common interests and are a role model to your mentee. Building positive connections helps a young person build resilience, gain confidence, and achieve new levels in all areas of their life. The most important thing to remember as a mentor is that you want to have fun with your mentee! You will provide a listening ear, share your skills and knowledge and get to make a difference to the community through the life of your mentee.

### **How long is the application process?**

The application process can take up to six weeks as it includes an interview, home visit, police check and referee checks. Then you undertake your orientation training. Once you are accepted on the programme as a mentor we will consider the young people waiting for a mentor and how their interests and needs will work well with yours.

We carefully consider, to ensure the longevity of a match, geographic location, interests, personality and needs of a young person before we match them with a volunteer mentor. In some instances, we may have the right fit with a young person and volunteer straight away, which means a match could happen very quickly, but this is not the norm.



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### **What does training involve?**

You will be in a group of other new mentors and we take you through a four hour programme including topics such as health and safety, risk management, child behaviour, match life cycle, communication, behaviour guidelines, child safety and strategies for common problems.

### **How will I be matched with a child?**

The application and interview process helps us to get to know your preferences as well as the situation best suited for you. It also helps you to get to know us and the programme expectations. We take into account your personality, likes, dislikes, age preferences, background and location. However, the final decision is yours.

The right fit is so important because it means the minimum 12-month commitment, where the benefits of mentoring are believed to become ingrained, is most likely to happen. Taking time helps ensure matches do not end early, causing a negative impact on the young person and/or mentor.

### **How do young people enter the programme?**

Children and parents may hear about BBBS from their school, a counsellor or a social worker. All children and their parents choose to be in our programme.

### **Who are the young people in the programme?**

The reasons for referring a young person can vary, some join us from single parent households, others may live with a grandparent or guardian who may be stretched to meet all the young person's needs in terms of giving one-to-one time.

Some young people may have experienced challenges and would benefit from having a friend and role model outside of the home. Others may have low confidence and would benefit from having a friend that can help nurture their self-esteem through talking, having fun and providing new experiences.

### **How will I get a child I get along with?**

The application process for a mentee to join the programme is similar to that of a mentor. We learn as much as we can about the young person, and yourself to ensure we can make the best match possible.

### **Is it safe being a mentor if I am male?**

Yes, we understand the perceived concern about potential risks and social stigmas, however there are rigorous processes, training and monitoring in place to support both the mentor and mentee while on the programme. All our male mentors report a love of mentoring their young people, with no issues.

### **How often do I get together with my mentee?**

Once a week. There is some flexibility around this if you have special circumstances, such as shift work that needs to be taken into consideration. Just let us know and we can talk it through.



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**Do I need to have a car and a full drivers license?**

Yes, you require access to a car and a full drivers license as you will need to pick up and drop off your mentee each time you go out.

**Do I need a Covid 19 Vaccine Passport?**

Yes, from 1 January 2022 any new volunteers applying to become mentors will need to be fully vaccinated. Acceptable evidence of full vaccination status will include a vaccine certificate from the Ministry of Health's My Covid Record.

**Can I mentor a child with my spouse/partner?**

Yes, we do offer couple matches.

**What support does Big Brothers Big Sisters provide?**

We vet and train our volunteer mentors, interview the young person and family to ensure everyone is on board, and establish interests and personality to make the most suitable match. After the application process you attend a 3.5 hour orientation training session, you are then ready to be matched.

Once you are matched a Mentor Coordinator provides professional match supervision throughout the match to all three parties (the child, family and mentor). After the match introduction meeting and first outing or two, we will check in on how things are going. Thereafter we communicate with all parties in person every month for the first 12 months. When a match reaches its 12 month anniversary we then check in every three months. BBBS team members are available outside these times by phone and email for any questions, worries or concerns too.

We also love to hear about wins and successes! BBBS provides support through ideas for activities, guidance in handling difficult situations and feedback on how a mentor (you) are making a difference, just by showing up! We also hold group events for mentors and mentees throughout the year.

**When do I go out with my mentee?**

Most mentors will see their mentee on the weekend, others meet up after school.

**Do I need to do a set time each week?**

Every match relationship differs and communication between the mentor and parent/guardian to ensure a mutually agreeable time works. Some matches meet the same day and time each week, and others vary.

**Who do I organise the outings with?**

You will be in direct contact with the parent/guardian to arrange the outing time each week.

**How much money should I spend?**



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We discourage you from spending a lot of money on your outings. The goal of the relationship is friendship. You should focus your time on getting to know each other. We encourage you to seek out free or low-cost activities, especially in the beginning. You may also receive notices of opportunities for free tickets for your match to attend a variety of cultural and sporting activities.

### **Can I bring my spouse/friend/family member on outings?**

In the beginning it is important for you and your Little Brother or Little Sister to get to know each other. This can happen best on a one-to-one basis. Over time it is also valuable for your Little Brother or Little Sister to get to know the people who are important to you. Keep in mind that if you're spending lots of time with others your Little Brother or Little Sister may begin to feel jealous or neglected. Remember that the main focus is the friendship YOU have with your Little Brother or Little Sister.

### **What do I do when we go out?**

For the first three months of a match, outings are required to be carried out in the community, visiting local parks, libraries, beaches and attractions are the norm for this period. After three months (subject to approval) the mentor has the option to take the mentee to their home where they often do creative activities such as baking, sewing, arts, crafts and building projects.

### **What are some good ideas for outings with my Little Brother or Little Sister?**

Share an activity that gives you something in common to talk about. Buy a comic book to read to each other, play a board game, or take a ride in the car with the radio on while you discuss music! You want to select activities that give each of you a chance to learn more about one another. For children, playing can be learning. Most importantly: keep it simple and have FUN!

### **How long has Big Brothers Big Sisters been around for?**

Big Brothers Big Sisters started in America in 1904 and in New Zealand in 1996. We have 13 branches currently operating in New Zealand. We are the world's largest youth mentoring programme and have been going for the longest. Hawke's Bay started in 2006 with a couple of years in limbo until relaunch in 2017. With robust practices and sound management, we hope to continue to be around for a very long time.

### **Where does Big Brothers Big Sisters funding come from?**

BBBS is a non-profit organisation supported by funds from generous donors including individuals, local business sponsors, grants from central and local government, philanthropic trusts and corporations.

### **How do I make a donation to Big Brothers Big Sisters?**

If you would like to find out how to make a donation or regularly support Big Brothers Big Sisters you can [do so on our website here](#).

### **How is my donation used? (Where does my money go?)**



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Your donation will support the Hawke's Bay BBBS agency. As a professional mentoring organisation, BBBS requires resources to maintain well-trained staff to screen volunteers, make matches, and support relationships between Mentors and Little Brothers and Sisters.

If you have any questions not answered here, please get in touch by email:

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